THE WAR RELOCATION WORK CORPS

A Circular of Information for Enlistees
and Their Families

"This generation of Americans has come to realize, with a present and personal realization, that there is something larger and more important than the life of any individual or of any individual group—something for which a man will sacrifice, and gladly sacrifice, not only his pleasures, not only his goods, not only his associations with those he loves, but his life itself. In time of crisis when the future is in the balance, we come to understand, with full recognition and devotion, what this nation is, and what we owe to it."

—PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT,
in his Message to the American People.
on February 23, 1942.

The War Relocation Authority
Washington, D. C.

DEFINITIONS

Assembly Center—A convenient gathering point, within the military area, where evacuees live temporarily while awaiting the opportunity for orderly, planned movement to a Relocation Center outside of the military area.

Relocation Center—A pioneer community, with basic housing and protective services provided by the Federal Government, for occupancy by evacuees for the duration of the war.

Relocation Area—The entire area surrounding a Relocation Center, under the jurisdiction of the War Relocation Authority. The relocation lands are Federally owned, are designated as military areas, and are protected by military police.

Work Project—Work projects, such as development of irrigated land, manufacturing enterprises, and farming, undertaken by the War Relocation Work Corps.

Enlistee—A person who enlists in the War Relocation Work Corps. Enlistment is for the duration of the war.

TO AMERICANS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY:

The democracies of the world are joined in a fight that will be fought until it is won. In this fight, all Americans are making difficult sacrifices. Americans in every portion of the country, Americans of many ancestries, are being put to the test. How each individual, how each group, meets a particular trial will measure his devotion to his Nation.

Americans of Japanese ancestry are now making great sacrifices. You are meeting a most difficult test. Wartime considerations make it necessary for you to leave your homes, your property, and old associations on the Pacific Coast military frontier, and to seek out a new, temporary way of living for the duration of the war.

To help you as much as possible, to assist you in establishing new wartime homes, and to make certain that you will have ample opportunity to earn a living and to contribute the maximum to the Nation's production, the Federal Government has undertaken a planned, orderly relocation program.

On March 18, 1942, the President of the United States established the War Relocation Authority and directed it, a civilian agency, to cooperate with the War Department in evacuating, relocating, and providing work opportunities for all who must leave designated military areas in the interest of national security. Within the Authority, the President established the War Relocation Work Corps.

The War Relocation Authority is now establishing Federally-owned and protected relocation projects. Within these areas you will have an opportunity to build new communities where you may live, work, worship, and educate your children. Life in these new communities will be as well-rounded and normal as possible under wartime conditions.

Many of you have asked for an opportunity to undertake useful work contributing to the war effort. That is why the President established a War Relocation Work Corps in which all able-bodied workers over 16 years of age may enlist for the duration of the war. Enlistment in the Corps is wholly voluntary. Your enlistment will give you an opportunity to serve your new community in many ways: To develop natural resources, to produce food, to manufacture essential articles, and to provide community services.

My personal observations during the past month agree with the reports I have received from numerous military and civilian officials: You are all cooperating wholeheartedly and cheerfully in the evacuation and relocation

program. You are demonstrating to the American people as a whole that you will make your contribution, no matter how trying it may be.

For the War Relocation Authority I wish to say that we intend to demonstrate to the world—to our friends and our enemies alike—that this Nation, grim in the fight it is waging, can at the same time be tolerant, patient, and considerate in handling this human problem of wartime migration and resettlement.

M. S. Eisenhower

Director
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

The War Relocation Work Corps

The principal purpose of this circular is to explain the War Relocation Work Corps in which you will soon have an opportunity to enlist.

However, first, to understand fully the purpose of the Corps and how it will operate, you should have in mind some essential facts about the whole evacuation and relocation program.

Evacuation and relocation involve the transplanting of more than 100,000 people from the military area of the Pacific Coast to selected Relocation Areas in the interior. A Relocation Area cannot be located merely by chance or whim. Relocation must be so managed as to enable you to establish communities where you have a real chance to obtain some return for your labor, where you can improve your homes, foster education, and build democratic institutions of government.

The mass migration of more than 100,000 people must involve several steps. The first is the evacuation from your homes to Assembly Centers within the military area.

An Assembly Center is merely a way-station to a war-duration Relocation Area. It is a temporary stopping place, where you are provided with food, shelter, medical care, and protection while Relocation Centers are being constructed.

Because Assembly Centers are only temporary residences, not many of you can be provided jobs while you are there. Of course, there will be some work in helping to operate the community services. As the Assembly Centers are emptied, there will be additional work in getting the people and their belongings ready to move and in salvaging the assembly buildings for later construction of schools and school equipment at Relocation Centers.

Relocation Areas

The second step in the evacuation and relocation program is the selection of Relocation Areas. The lands of the West are plentiful. But the water is scarce. Consequently, for weeks the War Relocation Authority has had many experts who know the West's resources thoroughly searching out the best possible Relocation Areas. They have combed the country from the border of Military Area No. 1 to the Mississippi River. These men, in their search, have in mind that they are selecting the home communities of large numbers of evacuees for the duration of the war. They are determined to find the places that will best provide opportunity for normal, secure, and industrious living for you and your families.

Their work is proceeding as rapidly as it can. Whenever these experts find what seems to be a promising Relocation Area they apply these specific tests:

1. The area must provide work opportunities throughout most of the year for the population to be relocated there. Such opportunities may consist of the following classes or combination of classes of work:

Public Works—Such as development of land for irrigation, conservation of soil resources, flood control operations, range improvement, operation of experimental projects for production of rubber and silk;

Agricultural Production—First for the production of foodstuffs for the relocated community, and second to aid in the Food for Freedom program;

Manufacturing—The manufacture of goods requiring a great deal of hand labor, including products needed in Relocation Areas.

2. Each Relocation Area must have adequate transportation and power facilities to meet the needs of the relocated community; it must have a sufficient acreage of good quality soil and an adequate supply of water for irrigation to provide the community with a good agricultural base; the climate must be satisfactory; the domestic and industrial water supply for the area must be suitable in quality and quantity.

3. Each area must be able to support a minimum population of 5,000 persons. Efficient administration of the program, provision of protective services by the Army, and the effective development of community services, such as schools, hospitals, fire-control facilities, and recreational opportunities, all require that communities be at least this large.

4. Each area must be on public land, owned or leased by the Federal Government, so that improvements made at public expense will become public, not private, assets. Any land purchased for Relocation Areas will remain in public ownership.

5. Each area must meet certain specifications of the War Department.

The War Relocation Authority and the Army already have selected five Relocation Areas capable of providing homes and a living for 60,000 people. Within a few weeks additional areas will be selected for an additional fifty thousand to sixty thousand evacuees.

A brief description of the Relocation Areas approved thus far appears at the back of this circular.

Relocation Centers

After a relocation area is approved, the next step is the construction of a Relocation Center.

Had canvas for great tent cities been available it would have been used. Tents would have been pitched and evacuees would then have gone to work building their new wartime homes.

Unfortunately, canvas could not be obtained. So, before evacuees leave the Assembly Centers group houses must be built, streets must be laid out, wells must be drilled and the water must be piped around the Center. Electric power lines and telephone lines must be brought in. This construction proceeds swiftly when the site is approved; houses for several thousand families are built in the matter of several weeks. The houses might be called "basic" structures; they are soundly constructed and provide the essentials for decent living. They are not fancy, but they are good. They are almost identical to most of the houses at Assembly Centers. At the Relocation Centers evacuees will have an opportunity to improve their quarters, as they wish, by their own work.

As the Relocation Centers are ready for occupancy, you will move to them. *This is the last step in the evacuation process, but it is the first step in the development of communities on the Relocation Areas.*

Family Life—Self Government

At Relocation Centers, as at Assembly Centers, families will be kept together, if they so wish. You may feel assured on this point: There is no reason whatever for interfering with normal family arrangements, and the Authority has no intention of doing so.

As you settle in a Relocation Center, it will be up to you to plan the design of the community life within the broad basic policies determined by the Authority for over-all administration of Relocation Areas. It will be up to you to establish and manage your own governmental services. You will elect your community officials, after having determined how you wish to manage elections. It will largely be up to you to maintain a police force, fire-control facilities, recreational activities, and many other essentials.

Health and Education

As at Assembly Centers, each Relocation Center will have hospitals and hospital equipment. Your own doctors will operate these hospitals and if additional space in them is needed you may build it.

Elementary schools and high schools will be maintained by the Authority, in cooperation with the States and the United States Office of Education. You may organize and manage nursery schools, as you no doubt will wish to do.

The Authority is now enlisting the help of non-governmental organizations which will try to arrange for the attendance of university and college students at midwestern institutions.

Household Effects

Most families will want to have various personal belongings, such as furniture, extra clothing, and household equipment, as soon as possible after settling in a Relocation Center. The Authority, on your request, will remove from storage and transport to your new home at the Center such furniture and personal belongings as can readily be used there.

Details of the War Relocation Work Corps

By now you probably are asking, "Just where does the War Relocation Work Corps fit into this program?"

The answer to that is simple: The Work Corps is a means for mobilizing the energies, skills and abilities of employable evacuees to do constructive work for your country and your community.

The Work Corps provides a means for organizing and apportioning opportunities for work and income on the relocation projects. It enables individuals to do the work for which they are most fitted by training and experience. It will provide additional training to adapt old skills to new jobs, and to develop new skills. It will recruit personnel for community and administrative services. It will give you an opportunity to demonstrate, in a very concrete way, your loyalty and willingness to serve your country.

Eligibility—All evacuees who are employable and more than 16 years of age, *both men and women*, may apply for enlistment in the Work Corps. Enlistment is entirely voluntary.

Method of Enlistment—Enlistment is accomplished by filling out an official form WRA-1 in duplicate at an Assembly Center or at a Relocation Center. The enlistment must be made before an official of the War Relocation Authority.

Obligations of Enlistee—The enlistee assumes certain definite obligations when he enlists:

First—He agrees to serve as a member of the Corps for the duration of the war, and for 14 days after the end of the war.

Second—He swears or affirms that he will be loyal to the United States of America in thought, word, and deed; that he will faithfully perform all tasks assigned him by the Authority; that he will accept in full payment for his service such cash and other allowances as may be provided by law or by regulations issued by the Authority.

Third—He agrees that:

1. He may be transferred from one Relocation Center to another as determined by the Authority from time to time.

2. Medical and hospital services will be provided, but any injury received or disease contracted while a member of the Corps cannot be made the basis of any claim against the United States Government.
3. He shall be subject to such special assessments for educational, medical, recreational, protective, and other public or community services and facilities as may be provided for in the regulations of the Authority or the ordinances of the community.
4. He may be granted furloughs for work in agricultural, industrial, or in other private employment, and while on such furlough will pay for the support of any dependents who may remain at Relocation Centers.
5. He will be responsible for any loss, willful destruction, sale, or disposal of any property issued to him by the Authority.
6. Any infraction of rules or regulations of the Authority, or any act or utterance disloyal to the United States, will render him liable to trial and suitable punishment.

Enlistment in the War Relocation Work Corps is accepted as a clear indication of the enlistee's patriotism and loyalty to the United States.

Obligations to Enlistees—The Federal Government accepts an obligation to provide the enlistee with a chance to work so that he may earn a living for himself and his family and also contribute to needed national production of agricultural and industrial goods.

The Government also accepts an obligation to see to it that, regardless of the financial success or failure of the project, housing, food, clothing, education, and health service are provided to the enlistee and his family.

Types of Work

There will be work for all able hands. There also will be a demand for a wide range of skills so that an enlistee, generally, will have an opportunity to continue at the same kind of work as he has been following, or if such work is not available, or if he can better use his capabilities at other types of endeavor, he will be given an opportunity to undertake training for other, more useful occupations.

One of the first tasks for enlistees at Relocation Centers will be to build schools and equipment so that children may continue their education. As previously indicated, the Authority is planning, in cooperation with State Departments of Education and the United States Office of Education, to provide competent teachers at all Centers, either by use of trained teachers among enlistees, or by hiring of teachers. Each Center will have its own school system.

Another early task for enlistees in the Relocation Centers will be the construction of additional hospitals, meeting halls, recreation facilities, and general improvement of buildings and grounds.

It will be highly important that agricultural production be started on the Relocation Area as soon as possible. All enlistees with agricultural experience and others, too, will be immediately employed in preparing land for farming, constructing irrigation canals and laterals, planting, cultivating, harvesting, and processing crops. It is hoped that all relocated communities will become self-sufficient in production of foodstuffs within the turn of a season, and that they will be producing additional crops for the Food for Freedom program in the very near future.

Another major undertaking at each Center will be the manufacture of many kinds of articles needed by the community and by the Nation. Simple factories using a large amount of hand labor and readily available materials will be established on the Relocation Projects wherever feasible, for operation by enlistees in the production of such products as clothing, wood products, ceramics, netting, woven and knitted materials, building materials.

These suggested opportunities cover only a few of the broader fields of activity in which enlistees may be engaged. Actually, their work will run the gamut of employment in a normal community. There will be much clerical and stenographic work, machinists' work, reporting and editing for the Center newspaper, nursing, cooking, radio repairing, and work for doctors and lawyers.

Incomes for Enlistees

The incomes earned on Relocation Areas by enlistees will depend to a great extent on the success that relocated communities have in organizing and managing their various productive enterprises.

In effect, the relocation projects will be a partnership enterprise between the relocated communities and the Federal Government. The precise methods of keeping costs, making monthly cash allowances, and computing income and profit will be described in detail in a publication to be issued soon by the Authority.

Private Employment

Furloughs may be granted for specific periods of time to enlistees who wish to accept employment opportunities outside Relocation Areas, under the following conditions:

1. Since the Army cannot provide protective services for groups or communities of less than 5,000, each State and local community where enlistees are to work must give assurance that they are in a position to maintain law and order.
2. Transportation to the place of private employment and return must be arranged without cost to the Federal Government.
3. Employers must, of course, pay prevailing wages to enlistees without displacing other labor and must provide suitable living accommodations.
4. For the time enlistees are privately employed, they will pay the Government for expenses incurred in behalf of their dependents who may remain at Relocation Centers.

Approved Relocation Areas

Manzanar

The Manzanar Relocation Area is located in the Owens River Valley in East Central California. The Relocation Center at Manzanar will accommodate a total of 10,000 residents, more than half of whom are already there.

The area affords limited opportunities for agricultural development, with three or four thousand acres suitable for irrigation. At present several small work projects are under way on the land, such as the production of guayule seedlings.

It is likely that this Center will depend largely on industrial opportunities and public works to provide useful work for its population. The equable climate is conducive to outdoor work, and an early project to be undertaken is the garnishing of camouflage nets.

Parker

The Parker Relocation Area is situated on the Colorado River Indian Reservation in southwestern Arizona, on a tract of land made available for irrigation by the erection of the Parker Dam. The area has an excellent potential agricultural base—some 80,000 acres of raw land that can be developed for production of a variety of crops. There will be plenty of worthwhile work for everyone. The bringing of the land into cultivation will require construction of laterals and ditches, clearing and leveling of the land. Considerable acreage will be made ready immediately for cultivation and production of subsistence food crops. Then, as a public works program, additional acreage will be prepared for cultivation.

The Parker Relocation Area is designed to take care of 20,000 evacuees. This population will be divided among three Centers, for which the basic housing is now practically completed. These three Centers are: No. 1, 17 miles south of Parker, with a capacity for 10,000; No. 2, 20 miles south of Parker, with facilities for 5,000; and No. 3, 23 miles south of Parker, capacity 5,000.

Gila

The Gila River Relocation Area is situated on the Pima Indian Reservation in southern Arizona, about forty miles from Phoenix. The Relocation Center now being constructed there will accommodate 10,000 evacuees—divided into two communities of 5,000 each. There will be plentiful opportunities for agricultural and public work on the area. There is also opportunity for private employment.

At present about 7,000 acres of the land on the area is in alfalfa and is in excellent condition to be converted immediately to vegetables and other specialty crops. An additional 8,000 acres of raw land can be developed for agricultural production, involving the construction of canals and ditches, and clearing and leveling the land.

The growing season is 270 days, and the climate and soil are generally favorable for a wide variety of agricultural production.

Tulelake

The Tulelake Relocation Area in northern California comprises 30,000 acres of land owned by the Federal Bureau of Reclamation. A Relocation Center is now being constructed there to house 10,000 evacuees.

Considerable work will have to be done to bring the land into intensive cultivation. Water is available.

The climate and soil are favorable for production of potatoes, field peas, small grains, and some other crops, as demonstrated by the type of agriculture carried on adjacent to the Relocation Area. Other possible work opportunities include the production of forest products, and the possible establishment of canning or dehydrating plants.

Minidoka

The Minidoka Relocation Area in southern Idaho, near Eden, consists of 17,000 acres owned by the Federal Bureau of Reclamation. Construction of housing for 10,000 evacuees is now under way.

A constructive public works project will be the lining of the main canal now serving the region. The canal now loses nearly half of its water through seepage.

The land is suitable for intensive production of sugar beets, potatoes, beans, onions, and possibly some other crops. The full acreage can be irrigated once the leaky canal is repaired. Construction during the first year of the necessary laterals and leveling of the land should bring about 5,000 acres into production by 1943.

Climatic conditions generally are favorable. There is a growing season of 138 days and annual rainfall is 8 to 10 inches.